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Book Review

ATLAS DER KLINISCHEN SYNDROME
FÜR KLINIK UND PRAXIS
Hans-Rudolf Wiedemann and Jürgen Kunze
Schattauer, Stuttgart–New York, 1996.

I am clearly biased to review the *Atlas der Klinischen Syndrome*. I have worked in the same Department of Human Genetics of the Free University of Berlin as Prof. Kunze pursuing my M.D. degree. This was followed by residency training in the Department of Pediatrics of the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, which Prof. Wiedemann headed until 1980. In addition to having been trained by both authors, I clearly remember a number of patients who are depicted in the atlas.

This *Atlas der Klinischen Syndrome* by Wiedemann and Kunze is now available in its fourth revised German edition. Compared to the previous edition, 45 syndromes have been added for a total of 318. Inherited and sporadic disorders are included, in addition to those disorders caused by prenatal exposure to teratogens or infections. A list of syndromes is given in the contents, followed by a "diagnostic overview" grouping the disorders under such headings such as "Syndromes with craniofacial anomalies," "Syndromes with tall stature," "Syndromes with short stature," etc. These tables and the thorough index in the back of the book are extremely helpful in generating a differential diagnosis.

Next is the atlas, with text on one side and up to 15 beautiful illustrations for each particular syndrome on the adjacent page. Mild malformations, minor anomalies, and variants are discussed in relation to their frequency in all liveborn infants and their association with specific disorders. This section alone provides 66 detailed illustrations. Following this part, well-defined syndromes are arranged according to systems affected. The discussion usually includes synonyms, major characteristics and occasional findings, age of manifestation, cause, frequency, prognosis, and differential diagnosis. The illustration on the opposite page consists of photographs of the face, a full view, and details of all major findings, frequently hands and feet, radiographs in selected cases, or even a blood smear in Chediak-Higashi syndrome or histological preparations as in ABC syndrome. A reference list is included for most disorders. It is remarkable that some of the references are as recent as 1995, whereas the underlying gene mutation in a few others has not yet been included (e.g., mutations in the genes leading to campomelic dysplasia and Lowe syndrome, respectively).

The book's numerous, well-selected illustrations are among its strong points. These become particularly important in regard to the less well known syndromes included in this edition, e.g., the Floating-Harbor syndrome. The detailed description of clinical findings, the photographs of facial appearance and radiographs demonstrating one of the hallmarks of this disorder (delayed bone age) will make readers aware of this probably underdiagnosed condition. However, some entries concern disorders that are so rare that no reference can be given at all, apparently because only a single patient was seen by one of the authors and no additional case reports have been published (e.g., cases 143: joint dysplasia, short stature and erythema, 242: malformation syndrome with mental retardation, and 277: malformation syndrome with cardiac anomalies).

Overall, this book gives an excellent, in-depth overview of congenital and inherited syndromes. Its organization makes it easy to use, whether one is looking for information on a specific syndrome or is working on a differential diagnosis. The numerous illustrations are immensely helpful to clinicians generating a diagnosis, teachers pointing out specific findings, and students attempting to memorize typical characteristics. Even readers who don't know German will benefit from this *Atlas der Klinischen Syndrome*. Hopefully, an English edition will become available soon.

This is a book that I recommend highly to every medical geneticist from beginner to the most experienced.

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